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Biden creates Native American boarding school national monument to mark era of forced assimilation

By **MATTHEW BROWN and MARC LEVY**
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — President Joe Biden designated a national monument at a former Native American boarding school in Pennsylvania on Monday to honor the resilience of Indigenous tribes whose children were forced to attend the school and hundreds of similar abusive institutions.

The White House announced the creation of the Carlisle Federal Indian Boarding School National Monument as Biden hosted a summit of tribal leaders.

More than 10,000 children passed through the notorious Carlisle Indian Industrial School by the time it closed in 1918, including Olympian Jim Thorpe. They came from dozens of tribes under forced assimilation policies that were meant to erase Native American traditions and "civilize" the children so they would better fit into white society.

The children were often taken against the will of their parents, and an estimated 187 Native American and Alaska Native children died at the institution in Carlisle, including from tuberculosis and other diseases.

"Designating the former campus of the Carlisle



A building that formed part of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School campus is seen at U.S. Army's Carlisle Barracks, Friday, June 10, 2022, in Carlisle, Pa.

Associated Press

School, with boundaries consistent with the National Historic Landmark, as a national monument will help ensure this shameful chapter of American history is never forgotten or repeated," Biden said in his proclamation for the monument.

There are ongoing efforts to return the children's remains, which were buried on the school's grounds, to their homelands. In September, the remains of three children who died at Carlisle were dis-

interred and returned to the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in Montana.

At least 973 Native American children died at government-funded boarding schools that operated for more than 150 years, according to an Interior Department investigation.

During a series of public listening sessions on reservations over the past several years hosted by the Interior Department, survivors of the schools recalled being

beaten, forced to cut their hair and punished for using their native languages.

The forced assimilation policy officially ended with the enactment of the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978. But the government never fully investigated the boarding school system until the Biden administration.

Biden in October apologized on behalf of the U.S. government for the schools and the policies that supported them. Interior Secretary Deb Ha-

land, whose grandparents were taken to boarding schools against their families' will, said no single action would adequately address the harms caused by the schools. But she said the administration's efforts have made a difference and the new monument would allow the American people to learn more about the government's harmful policies. "This trauma is not new to Indigenous people, but it is new for many people in our nation," Haaland said in a statement.

The schools, similar institutions and related assimilation programs were funded by a total of \$23.3 billion in inflation-adjusted federal spending, officials determined. Religious and private institutions that ran many of the schools received federal money as partners in the assimilation campaign.

Monday's announcement marks the seventh national monument created by Biden. The 25-acre site (10 hectares) will be managed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Army. The site is part of the campus of the U.S. Army War College.

Native American tribes and conservation groups are pressing for more monument designations before Biden leaves office. □



New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy at the Princeton Public Library on Monday, Dec. 9, 2024, signs legislation aimed at barring public libraries and schools from banning books.

Associated Press

By **MIKE CATALINI**
Associated Press

PRINCETON, N.J. (AP) — New Jersey Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy signed a law Monday to prohibit public and school libraries from banning books

in the state and to enshrine protections against civil and criminal charges for librarians who comply with the law. New Jersey becomes the latest Democrat-led state to enact a ban on book bans,

New Jersey becomes latest state to prohibit bans on books in school, public libraries

joining Illinois and Minnesota. Murphy signed the bill at Princeton's public library, a short walk from Princeton University's ivy-draped campus and cast the legislation in the context of Republican-leaning states that have prohibited certain books in recent years.

"It's the antithesis of all these book banning states that you see," he said. "I'm incredibly proud to have signed it, but also acknowledge that America — and this is yet another good example — is becoming a patchwork quilt country. It really matters where you live."

Under the law, public and school libraries are barred from excluding books because of the origin, background, or views of the material or of its authors. Censoring books will also be prohibited solely because a person finds them offensive. The bill permits restriction in the case of "developmentally inappropriate material" for certain age groups. The measure also requires local school boards and the governing bodies of public libraries to set up policies for book curation and the removal of library materials, including a way to address concerns over certain items.

According to the American Library Association, over 4,200 works in school and public libraries were targeted in 2023, a jump from the old record of nearly 2,600 books in 2022. Many challenged books 2023 had LGBTQ+ and racial themes.

Restrictions in some states have increased so much that librarians and administrators worry about lawsuits, hefty fines and even imprisonment if they provide books that others regard as inappropriate. Lawmakers in more than 15 states have introduced bills to impose harsh penalties on libraries or librarians in 2024. □

A 'strong person of interest' has been arrested in the UnitedHealthcare CEO's killing, police say

By MICHAEL R. SISK and CEDAR ATTANASIO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Police arrested a "strong person of interest" Monday in the brazen Manhattan killing of UnitedHealthcare's CEO after a quick-thinking McDonald's employee in Pennsylvania alerted authorities to a customer who was found with a weapon and writings linking him to the ambush.

The 26-year-old man had a gun believed to be the one used in the killing and writings suggesting his anger with corporate America, police officials said.

He was taken into custody after police got a tip that he was eating at a McDonald's in Altoona, Pennsylvania, NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch said at a news conference.

He had clothing and a mask similar to those worn by the shooter and a fraudulent New Jersey ID matching one the suspect used to check into a New York City hostel before the shooting, Tisch said.

NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny identified the suspect as Luigi Nicholas Mangione, who was born and raised in Maryland, has ties to San Francisco and a last known address in Honolulu, Hawaii. A message left Monday with a Philadelphia-area phone number connected to Mangione was not immedi-



NYPD officers in diving suits sit after searching the lake in the Central Park, Monday, Dec. 9, 2024, in New York.

ately returned.

Mangione was being held in Pennsylvania on gun charges and will eventually be extradited to New York to face charges in connection with Thompson's death, Kenny said.

Police found a three-page document with writings suggesting that Mangione had "ill will toward corporate America," Kenny said. The handwritten document "speaks to both his motivation and mindset," Tisch said.

Mangione had a ghost gun, a type of weapon that can be assembled at home from parts without

a serial number, making them difficult to trace, investigators said.

"As of right now the information we're getting from Altoona is that the gun appears to be a ghost gun that may have been made on a 3D printer, capable of firing a 9 mm round," Kenny said.

Officers questioned Mangione, who was acting suspiciously and carrying multiple fraudulent IDs, as well as a U.S. passport, Tisch said. Officers found a suppressor, "both consistent with the weapon used in the murder," the commissioner said.

NYPD detectives and staff from the Manhattan district attorney's office were traveling to Altoona to interview Mangione, Kenny said.

UnitedHealth CEO Brian Thompson, 50, was killed last Wednesday in what police said was a "brazen, targeted" attack as he walked alone to the Hilton from a nearby hotel, where UnitedHealthcare's parent company, UnitedHealth Group, was holding its annual investor conference, police said.

The shooter appeared to be "lying in wait for several minutes" before ap-

proaching the executive from behind and opening fire, NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch said. He used a 9 mm pistol that police said resembled the guns farmers use to put down animals without causing a loud noise.

In the days since the shooting, police turned to the public for help by releasing a collection of nine photos and video including footage of the attack, as well as images of the suspect at a Starbucks beforehand.

On Monday, police credited news outlets for disseminating the images and the tipster for recognizing the suspect and calling authorities.

"Luckily, a citizen in Pennsylvania recognized the subject and called local members of the Altoona Police Department responded to the call, and based on their investigation, they notified the NYPD," Kenny said.

Photos taken in the lobby of a hostel on Manhattan's Upper West Side showed the suspect grinning after removing his mask, police said.

Investigators earlier suggested the gunman may have been a disgruntled employee or client of the insurer. Ammunition found near Thompson's body bore the words "delay," "deny" and "depose," mimicking a phrase used by insurance industry critics. □



Marc Tice, left, and Debra Tice, the parents of Austin Tice, a journalist who was kidnapped in Syria, update the media about their son's condition as they continue to push for his release, Friday, Dec. 6, 2024, during a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington.

Associated Press

U.S. hostage envoy in Beirut to seek information on missing journalist Austin Tice

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's top hostage negotiator is in Beirut in hopes of collecting information on the whereabouts of Austin Tice, an American journalist missing in Syria for 12 years, the State Department said Monday.

Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, is talking to officials in the region following the overthrow of Bashar Assad's government to find

out where Tice is and "get him home as soon as possible," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters Monday. Lebanon has been involved for years in mediating talks about Tice.

President Joe Biden said Sunday that his administration believed Tice was alive and was committed to bringing him home, though he also acknowledged that "we have no direct evidence" of his status.

Tice, who has had his work published by The Washington Post, McClatchy newspapers and others, disappeared at a checkpoint in a contested area west of Damascus as the Syrian civil war intensified.

A video released weeks after Tice went missing showed him blindfolded and held by armed men and saying, "Oh, Jesus." He has not been heard from since. Syria has publicly denied that it was holding him. □

Veteran Daniel Penny is acquitted in NYC subway chokehold case over Jordan Neely's death

By JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A Marine veteran who used a chokehold on an agitated subway rider was acquitted on Monday in a death that became a prism for differing views about public safety, valor and vigilantism.

A Manhattan jury cleared Daniel Penny of criminally negligent homicide in Jordan Neely's 2023 death. A more serious manslaughter charge was dismissed last week because the jury deadlocked on that count. Penny, who had shown little expression during the trial, briefly smiled as the verdict was read. While celebrating later with his attorneys, he said he felt "great."

Both applause and anger erupted in the courtroom, and Neely's father and two supporters were ushered out after audibly reacting. Another person also left, wailing with tears.

"It really, really hurts," Neely's father, Andre Zachery, said outside the courthouse. "I had enough of this. The system is rigged." The case amplified many American fault lines, among them race, politics, crime, urban life, mental illness and homelessness. Neely was Black. Penny is



Daniel Penny, center, arrives at criminal court, Monday, Dec. 9, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

white.

There were sometimes dueling demonstrations outside the courthouse, including on Monday. High-profile Republican politicians portrayed Penny as a hero while prominent Democrats attended Neely's funeral. Penny's attorneys argued he was protecting himself and other subway passengers from a volatile, mentally ill man who was making alarming remarks and gestures.

Penny "finally got the jus-

tice he deserved," one of his lawyers, Thomas Keniff, said while celebrating the outcome with him at a downtown Manhattan pub.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat whose office brought the case, said prosecutors "followed the facts and the evidence from beginning to end" and respect the verdict.

The anonymous jury, which had started deliberating Tuesday, was escorted out

of court to a van.

Penny, 26, served four years in the Marines and went on to study architecture.

Neely, 30, was a sometime subway performer with a tragic life story: His mother was killed and stuffed in a suitcase when he was a teenager.

As a younger man, Neely did Michael Jackson tributes complete with moonwalks on the city's streets and subways. But Neely also struggled with mental illness after losing his moth-

er, whose boyfriend was convicted of murdering her.

He subsequently was diagnosed with depression and schizophrenia, was repeatedly hospitalized, and used the synthetic cannabinoid K2 and realized it negatively affected his thinking and behavior, according to medical records seen at the trial. The drug was in his system when he died.

Neely told a doctor in 2017 that being homeless, living in poverty and having to "dig through the garbage" for food made him feel so hopeless that he sometimes thought of killing himself, hospital records show. About six years later, he boarded a subway under Manhattan on May 1, 2023, hurled his jacket onto the floor, and declared that he was hungry and thirsty and didn't care if he died or went to jail, witnesses said. Some told 911 operators that he tried to attack people or indicated he'd harm riders, and several testified that they were afraid.

Neely was unarmed, with nothing but a muffin in his pocket, and didn't touch any passengers. One said he made lunging movements that alarmed her enough that she shielded her 5-year-old from him. □

Santa Ana winds return means increased fire risk, possible power shut-offs for Southern California



Inmate firefighters battle the Mountain Fire at Swanhill Farms in Moorpark, Calif., Nov. 7, 2024.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Southern California's notorious Santa Ana winds were predicted to return Monday night and utilities said they are prepared to cut power to hundreds of thousands of customers in areas where strong gusts could damage electrical equipment and spark wildfires.

The National Weather Service issued a rare "particularly dangerous situation," or PDS, red flag warning for high fire risk into Tuesday for Los Angeles and Ventura counties. The last time PDS red flags went up was the first week of November, when powerful, dry winds fed the Mountain Fire, which destroyed at least 240 buildings, mostly homes, in Ventura County. Before that, a PDS red flag warning hadn't been issued for the region since 2020.

"This event has the potential to be as strong as the November 5th-6th Santa Ana event that led to the Mountain Fire," the

weather service office for Los Angeles said Sunday on social media.

Southern California Edison said it was considering targeted power shut-offs for more than 250,000 homes and businesses across seven counties starting Monday evening. Meanwhile San Diego Gas & Electric said it has notified nearly 117,500 customers that they might temporarily lose service to reduce the chance of wildfires.

Santa Anas are dry, warm and gusty north-east winds that blow from the interior of Southern California toward the coast and offshore. They typically occur during the fall months and continue through winter and into early spring.

In Northern California, the weather service said chances were increasing for an "impactful rainfall event" late in the week for the San Francisco Bay Area. □

Hundreds of Syrians line up at Turkish border crossings as Erdogan expects more to go home

By MUCAHIT CEYLAN and MEHMET GUZEL

Associated Press

CILVEGOZU BORDER CROSSING, Turkey (AP) —

Hundreds of Syrian refugees gathered at two border crossings in southern Turkey on Monday, eagerly anticipating their return home following the fall of Bashar Assad's government.

Many arrived at the Cilvegözü and Oncupinar gates at daybreak, draped in blankets and coats. Some camped by the barriers, warming at makeshift fires. The crossings correspond to the Bab al-Hawa and Bab al-Salameh gates on the Syrian side.

Among those waiting at Cilvegözü was 28-year-old Mohammed Zin, who fled Damascus in 2016 and has been living and working in Istanbul. "Assad was shooting us, killing us," he told The Associated Press. "I will return to Syria now. Thank God, the war is over."

Assad's fall has sparked widespread joy among Tur-



Syrians talk to a Turkish gendarme officer as they wait to cross into Syria from Turkey at the Cilvegözü border gate, near the town of Antakya, southern Turkey, Monday, Dec. 9, 2024.

Associated Press

key's 3 million Syrian refugees, with many taking to the streets of Istanbul and other cities to celebrate. On Sunday, Syrians removed the government's flag from the Syrian Consulate in Istanbul, replacing it

with the opposition's flag. At the Oncupinar border gate, Mustafa Sultan, 29, said he was crossing into Syria to find his older brother who was imprisoned in Damascus under Assad's rule. "I haven't seen him for

13 years. The prisons have been emptied so I am going to go see whether he's alive," he said.

Turkish officials have not said how many Syrians have returned since Assad's downfall on Sunday. But

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the numbers would increase as Syria stabilizes, and announced plans to reopen a third border crossing to prevent congestion.

"As Syria gains more stability, God willing, voluntary, safe and honorable returns will increase," Erdogan said in a televised address following a Cabinet meeting. Turkey welcomed Syrian refugees with open arms in the early years of Syria's civil war that broke out in 2011 becoming host to the world's largest number of refugees. Ankara believed the conflict would end quickly and the influx would be temporary.

But as Turkey faced economic challenges, public opinion toward the refugees soured, forcing Erdogan's government to seek ways to ensure their safe and voluntary repatriation. Turkish officials now hope that a significant number of Syrians will return voluntarily. □

Nobel Peace Prize winner urges Putin to understand the destructiveness of nuclear weapons

By FANNY BRODERSEN and VANESSA GERA

Associated Press

OSLO, Norway (AP) —

Terumi Tanaka, a survivor of the U.S. atomic bombings of Japan and the representative of an organization that won this year's Nobel Peace Prize, called on Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday to stop making nuclear threats.

The 92-year-old spoke at a news conference in Oslo, Norway, a day before a ceremony where he is to deliver a lecture on behalf of Nihon Hidankyo, an organization of survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that won this year's prize.

Asked by a reporter if he had a message for Putin, Tanaka said that the Russian leader's repeated nuclear threats convinced him that Putin must not understand how devastating

the use of nuclear weapons would be.

He said that his organization's message to Putin which he said had also been conveyed to the Russian leader directly is that "nuclear weapons are things which must never be used."

"I don't think he has even thought about this or understood this. Therefore, he is able to say these kind of things. So I think that how we can change his way of thinking is what we need to do to have him really understand what these are," he said through a translator.

The first U.S. atomic bombing killed 140,000 people in the city of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. A second on Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945, killed another 70,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, ending World War II.

Tanaka was 13 and living in

Nagasaki when the United States dropped the atomic bomb there.

While he did not suffer major injuries himself, he lost five family members, and has said that the images of burned bodies in the devastated city are etched in his memory.

Jørgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said in announcing the award weeks ago that it was made as the "taboo against the use of nuclear weapons is under pressure."

The committee noted that rather than embrace disarmament, nuclear powers are upgrading their arsenals, while other countries appear to be preparing to acquire nuclear weapons. It also noted that threats are being made to use the weapons in ongoing warfare, an apparent reference to Russia's threats

amid its war in Ukraine.

The Japanese group's elderly members are calling for the abolishment of nuclear weapons, a message also directed at the United States.

Tanaka noted that "we are old now" but still carry a

"heavy sense of responsibility" as witnesses to remind the world of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons.

"Nuclear weapons and humanity cannot coexist," he said. □



Representatives of this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner Nihon Hidankyo, from left, Terumi Tanaka, Toshiyuki Mimaki and Shigemitsu Tanaka arrive in Gardermoen, Norway Sunday evening, Dec. 8, 2024.

Associated Press

Mexican soldiers will get a pay raise after elimination of oversight agencies, president says

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president said Monday that much of the money gained by eliminating independent oversight and regulatory agencies will go to the army to fund a rise in soldiers' pay.

The announcement by President Claudia Sheinbaum is the latest in a series of new and unusual funding sources to pay for the country's increasingly influential military.

Last week, Mexico's Congress approved charging every cruise ship passenger a \$42 immigration fee, with much of that money also going to the armed forces. Under Sheinbaum's Morena party, since 2019 the military has been given powers to build and run everything from railways, airports and airlines in Mexico, and some of those projects appear to be losing money. For over a century before, Mexico's armed forces were very limited in their actions, restricted from taking any role in politics and didn't have many business interests. But that all changed under Sheinbaum's predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who saw the army as



A soldier participates in the Independence Day military parade in the Zocalo, Mexico City's main square, Sept. 16, 2024.

a loyal, unquestioning ally and a safeguard for his political and policy legacy. López Obrador, Sheinbaum's political mentor, also made the armed forces, and the quasi-military National Guard, the country's main law enforcement forces.

In late November, Mexico's Senate voted to eliminate seven independent regulatory and oversight agen-

cies, a move that critics warn will cement the ruling party's power and avoid outside scrutiny.

Sheinbaum called it a money-saving measure, arguing that the government can more efficiently handle functions like freedom of information requests, anti-monopoly enforcement and energy-market regulation.

However, critics and for-

eign investors and critics fear this could open the door to favoritism and a lack of transparency.

And earlier this month, Mexico's Senate controlled by the president's Morena party voted to charge cruise ship passengers \$42 per head for port calls, drawing sharp criticism from the tourism industry.

Mexican business chambers say the immigration

charge from which cruise passengers used to be exempt may hurt the country's \$500 million per year cruise industry.

Two-thirds of the money raised from the cruise ship charges would go to the Mexican army, not to improve port facilities.

Moreover, many of the military-run projects appear to be big money losers, which may help explain the government's urge to find extra funding for the armed forces.

For example, one of López Obrador's pet projects the "Maya Train," a tourist line which runs in a loop around the Yucatan Peninsula has drawn only 20% of the ridership expected when it was proposed.

The Maya Train started service on Dec. 16, 2023. While it's not completely finished two relatively little-used stretches are scheduled to enter service later this month the most popular and heavily-travelled parts of the line are already in service.

As of Dec. 8, authorities announced the train line had carried a little more than 600,000 passengers in its first 51 weeks. □

Associated Press

Ghana's ex-leader is declared the winner of the presidential election

By FRANCIS KOKUTSE and MONIKA PRONCZUK

Associated Press

ACCRA, Ghana (AP) —

Ghana's former leader John Dramani Mahama was officially declared the winner of the presidential election on Monday evening, after voters vented anger at the government's handling of the economy. Previously president between 2012 and 2017, Mahama, 65, received 6.3 million votes, or 56.5% of votes cast, the electoral commission said.

Mahama's main opponent, Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia, conceded defeat on Sunday. Bawumia got 4.6 million votes, or 41%. The turnout based on the

votes from 267 constituencies stands at 60.9 percent, said Jean Mensa, the electoral commissioner. Although vote counting was ongoing in nine constituencies, that will not change the final result, Mensa added.

Mahama has described his victory as "emphatic." He had promised to "reset" the country on various fronts, during a campaign that prioritized the economy and largely appealed to young Ghanaians who saw the vote as a way out of the country's economic crisis. After Bawumia conceded defeat, celebrations broke out on Sunday among the supporters of the opposition candidate in parts of

the country, including the capital city. Wearing the opposition party's white, green, red and black colors, women and young people danced to music and trumpet blasts on the streets and at the party's national headquarters.

The election for both the president and members of parliament was held against the backdrop of the country's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. It was seen as a litmus test for democracy in a region shaken by extremist violence and coups. West Africa's regional bloc of ECOWAS said the election was generally peaceful, a continuing trend in Ghana. Bawumia was running as



Supporters of opposition candidate and former President John Dramani Mahama celebrate his victory after his opponent conceded in Accra, Ghana, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024.

Associated Press

the flagbearer of the ruling New Patriotic Party, or NPP, which has struggled to resolve the economic crisis under outgoing President Nana Akufo-Addo. Mahama's National Democratic Congress also won the majority in parliament, he said.

Mahama's win is viewed as following the latest trend of elections around the world, favoring opposition parties against incumbents, from the United States to European countries such as Britain and France as well as South Africa. □

Visit the island's hidden natural pools

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two “hidden” natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the

Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle’s Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you’re up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you’ve completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It’s also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hid-



den there. Because it’s still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won’t be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped

lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you’ll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder.

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours



Aruban snacks and where to find them

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes



even fish! Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a “kroket,” which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the “bitterbal”.

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find pastechis and kroketts at local bakeries and snack shops, like Bright Bakery in Piedra Plat, Huchada in Santa Cruz or Pastechi House in the city center. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you’re at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing “batido”? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batido shops next the flea markets downtown, or if you’re on your way to San Nicolas, at Mauchi Smoothies and Juice Bar in Savaneta (located at the side of the



main road).

If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

1. Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.

2. Along the main road next to the airport field.
3. At the California Light House.
4. At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert “cocada” or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them!

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com




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Po-Ke Ono Azure launches exclusive breakfast menu



Po-Ke Ono Azure is proud to announce the launch of its exclusive breakfast menu, inviting guests to experience mornings infused with Asian-inspired flavors, fresh ingredients, and a touch of tropical paradise.

Located at the scenic Azure Residences at Eagle Beach, Po-Ke Ono now offers an exceptional morning menu with options like the Thai Breakfast Bowl, Acai Bowl, and



Asian Omelet. Designed to bring unique flavors to Aruba's breakfast scene, the menu also includes fresh coffee, mimosas, and tropical juices, perfect for pairing with the restaurant's relaxed beachside atmosphere.

"Our goal was to create a breakfast experience that captures the essence of Po-Ke Ono and brings a fresh twist to mornings here at Azure," said Executive Chef Urvin Croes, founder of Po-Ke Ono. "Each dish is crafted with care, featuring

ingredients that highlight the vibrant, Asian-inspired flavors we're known for."



Available every morning at Po-Ke Ono Azure, the new breakfast lineup is ideal for early risers and those looking for a unique start to their day.

About Po-Ke Ono Azure

Since its inception, Po-Ke Ono has quickly become a culinary landmark in Aruba, known for its signature fusion of Hawaiian and Asian flavors. With two locations across the island, Po-Ke Ono continues to innovate and delight, with Po-Ke Ono Azure offering exclusive breakfast options at the iconic Eagle Beach. □



Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website,

Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Lyn C. Brubaker from Lancaster, PA, USA.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is ... nature's elixir to smile more often, say thank you more readily, offer hugs more frequently, listen more intently, accept compliments with humility ... nature's elixir free of charge, Duty Free, to take back home with me to share with others."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

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Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations



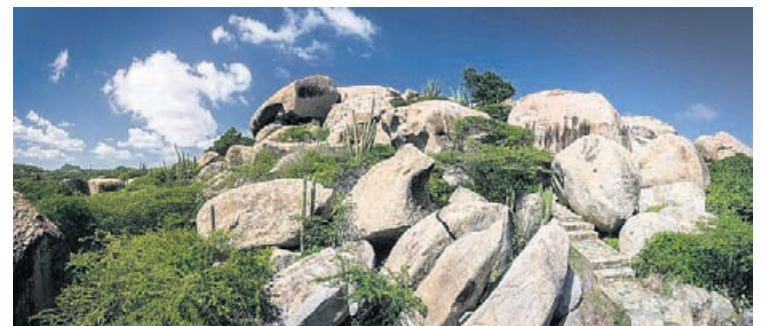
(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your "off-road" trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of

the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding "mondi"*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The

Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.



Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great

place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure!

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! ☐

Adriaan Laclé One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century

(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the bigger roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often

helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad. Regarding his personal life,

it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends

and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as a townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. ☐

Source: *De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)* by Evert Bongers.



The Lionfish And its threat to our marine wild life

(Oranjestad)—Despite its colorful and striking appearance, the lionfish has become a Caribbean-wide problem for Atlantic sea life. The Aruban marine wild life is also affected by this beautiful dilemma, as it is foreign to our waters and has become a danger to our local fish and reefs.

Originating from the Indo-Pacific Ocean, the lionfish is a relatively small fish. It has no teeth, but it does protect itself against predators using its sharp, colorful spikes. It is said that the sting of a lionfish can be up to 100 times more painful than that of a

bee's sting.

Its natural predators in the Indo-Pacific are sharks and barracudas, but in the Caribbean Sea, local fish do not recognize the lionfish as part of their diet. In other words, the lionfish has no predators in the Caribbean Sea. And this becomes a major problem for our local marine life; if there are no predators to stimulate population control of lionfish, these fish can continue to reproduce and expand to other parts of the Atlantic, become more invasive and dangerous for other types of fish.



For Aruba, the lionfish is a problem especially for our local coral reefs. According to Patrick van Brakel, lionfish expert and hunter from the Hunting Lionfish Aruba foundation, every reef has a "cleaning station"—tiny fish that eat algae and other types of waste on a reef, thus maintaining the reef's health and providing food to the fish population in the area. However, as the lionfish feeds off of these tiny fish, it becomes harder for the coral reef to maintain its health.

Patrick also shares the origins of lionfish in the Caribbean Sea. It is theorized that the introduction of these fish in the

Atlantic happened in Florida, where people would buy lionfish from across the world to keep in their aquariums. However, lionfish grow, and as these buyers realized that the fish were too much upkeep, they were let out into the ocean to roam free. From continental USA, the lionfish travelled to and invaded the entire Caribbean area, from Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao up to New York. In Aruba, lionfish were discovered in 2009.

Controlling the lionfish population is challenge, as each female fish can lay up to 40,000 eggs a day. Luckily, we have people like van

Brakel who dedicate their lives hunting and capturing these invasive species, using them for consumption and jewelry making.

They are caught with a hand spear, an object resembling a garbage picker with 4 sharp prongs. These spears are used like a sling shot to catch lionfish from a distance. These fish are then put into a collecting tube and taken out of the water. Van Brakel not only catches them himself, but also cooks them for locals and tourists at The LionFish Snack Aruba in Paradera. This way, he does his part in protecting the local wild life. □



The Bali Restaurant: a touristic hot spot and lost gem on the island

(Oranjestad)—Once located in what is now the Renaissance Marina, the Bali Restaurant was once both a touristic and local hot spot, and nowadays it's considered a forgotten gem on the island.

Known as "the floating restaurant", Bali first opened in 1955 by Willem "Bill" Strijland, who had experience in Javanese cuisine. At the time, the restaurant was pretty exclusive—with space to host only 25 guests. Yet, 4 years later, it was named the best restaurant in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Tourist Association.

The restaurant was probably most iconic for its Javanese-inspired exterior



with its pointy, slanted roofs. However, the first version of Bali did not look like that at all but was still considered as one of the most popular restaurants on the island at the time. The restaurant saw three different owners during its existence, during which it underwent various renovations and rebranding.

In 1964, the restaurant was taken over by Karel "Carl" Schmand. Over the years, the restaurant needed constant renovation and repair, mainly due to its vulnerability to leaks and the unstable pillars underneath the foundation. However, the biggest change made to the restaurant happened in the year 1970—still under

the ownership of Schmand, when it got its iconic pointy roofs. The restaurant was also expanded to host a total of 85 guests. This was "The New Bali", who had its official (re) opening in 1972.

After 1972, when Ronny Schmand took over, the restaurant saw yet another expansion; this time complete with a long bar and dance floor, where guests enjoyed live music from legendary Aruban musician and composer, Toti Arends.

After 1989, the restaurant was again handed over to other owners, and since then suffered from unstable pillars underneath the foundation, resulting in various leaks and overflowing of water into

the restaurant. And as most great things come to an end, so did the survival and maintenance of the Bali Restaurant. However, folks today still reminisce its legacy, and it's now considered a lost monument.

Be apart of the conversation: if you or any family member of yours have a memory of the Bali restaurant, whether it be a picture or just a story, share it with us! We would love to see this legendary hot spot through the lens of our visitors!

Source and pictures credit to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers. □

Visit the island's popular cave sites!



(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an “off-road” tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves...and be sure to bring a flashlight!

Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri

Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual

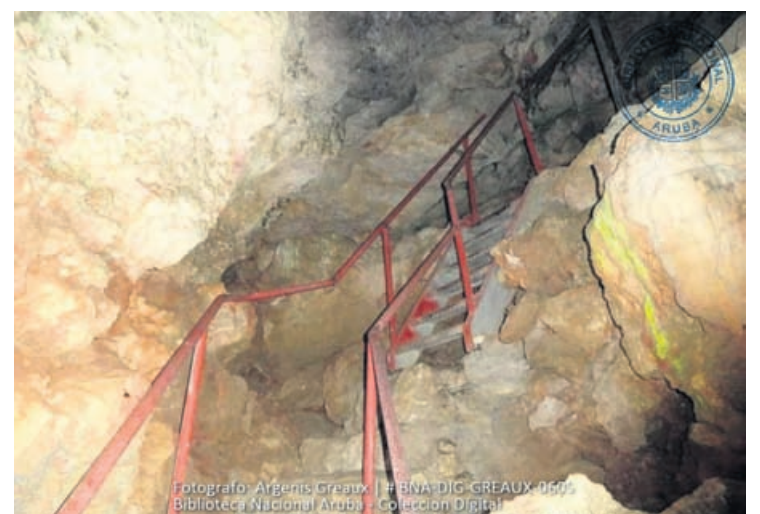
ceremonies.

The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Awarak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy, and don't forget to bring a flashlight! □



CROSSWORD

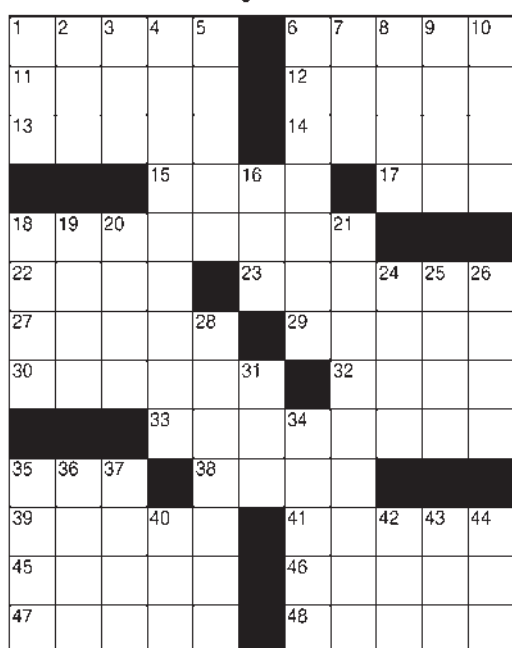
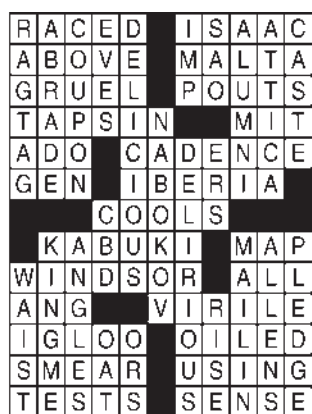
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 47 Cart
1 Taken — pullers (surprised)
6 Of the kidneys
11 Praline nut
12 Sports venue
13 Tick off
14 Burger part
15 Heaps
17 Bro's sibling
18 Chihua-hua, for one
22 Leslie Caron film
23 Jazz pianist Garner
27 Less friendly
29 Mideast peninsula
30 Paris subways
32 Letter after epsilon
33 More disreputable
35 — Vegas
38 Boat part
39 Entertain
41 Human, for one
45 "Water Lilies" painter
46 Christo-pher of "Super-man"

DOWN

- 1 Phone download
2 Hive dweller
3 Star pitcher
4 Cleveland cagers
5 Ring
6 Toronto cagers
7 History stretch
8 Brooklyn cagers
9 Opposed
10 Puts down
16 Poem of praise
18 Narrow
19 Maze runners
20 Stepped down
21 Memphis cagers
24 "Dedicated to the — Love"
25 Past due
26 Deceitful person
28 Houston cagers
31 Take to court
34 Horse's cousin
35 Tibetan monk
36 Singer Tori
37 Phoenix cagers
40 Spot
42 Energy
43 Genesis woman
44 Cub's cave



12-11

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-11

CRYPTOQUOTE

RTCIQVUU WCNRKR XCNW

GTTKW BZGUA YC AWKVE

VTA FUVX CTBK ECWK.

— VTOGK IKGU VTA-BWCRPX
Cryptoquote: I'M IN A GOOD PLACE
RIGHT NOW. NOT EMOTIONALLY — I'M JUST ON
ROLLER SKATES. — UNKNOWN

Cruise ship Schedule: December 09 - 15 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	09	CELEBRITY ECLIPSE	08.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	10	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
		EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	I	1
WED	11	ZUIDERDAM	07.00	16.00	B	1
		AIDABELLA	10.00	****	C	1
		SILVER MOON	08.00	23.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	12	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	I	1
		AIDABELLA - Dept.	****	18.00	C	-
FRI	13	EVIRIMA	07.00	19.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VENEZIA	09.00	22.00	C	1
SUN	15	OCEANIA NAUTICA	11.00	21.00	C	1
		EURODAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

Supermarket hours

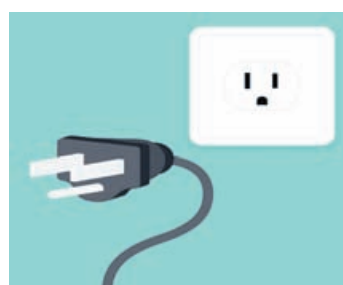


Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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Classifieds

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Cabana Beach and Casino

Eagle beach
One bedroom week # 51 room # 329 A
Thursday day check in
Price : \$9000
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Phoenix

Palm beach
One bedroom week # 52 room #953
One bedroom week # 01 room #654
Contract expire:2058
Price : \$ 60,000 both weeks
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Phoenix

Palm beach
Two bedroom penthouse week # 1 room # 770 with 22 weeks remaining
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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Eagle Beach
One Bedroom week # 2 room # 5538
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One bedroom sleep 4
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Price : \$ 2500
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Marriott Surf Club

Palm beach
Platinum season
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Ocean side
Price : \$ 25,000
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For sale

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Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

For Rent

Renaissance Ocean suites
Private islands
One bedroom sleep 4
Date : 3 January to 17 January 2025
Price : \$ 2000 each week
Call : 011-297 -630-1307
Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Cabana Beach and Casino

Eagle beach
Christmas week
One bedroom sleep 4
Date :19 December to 26 December 2024
Price : \$ 2000
Call : 011-297-630-1307

Divi Village Golf

Eagle Beach one bedroom
Sleep 4 week # 50 room # 2258
Birdie 10 with 24 weeks remaining Price : \$ 8000
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle beach one bedroom
Sleep 4 week # 51 room # 2258
Birdie 10 with 24 weeks remaining Price : \$ 12,000
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

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One bedroom week 52 room # 3308
With 16 weeks remaining on the contract
C- building elevator
Price : \$ 10,000
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

Eagle beach
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C- Building elevator
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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Renaissance ocean suites

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Renaissance ocean suites

Private islands
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Harbor / ocean view
Price : \$10,000
Call : 011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com



HEALTH

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Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

del Pueblo: Tel.582 1253

San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto:Tel.584 4833

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850

Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

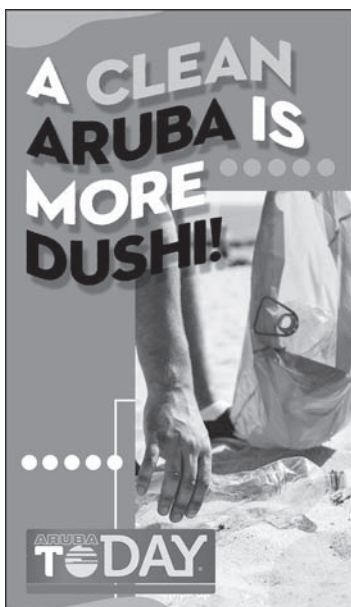
AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes	Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118



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Editors
Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuereo

Sales
Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
f @arubatoday



It's his job to keep American's planes running on time

By **DAVID KOENIG**

AP Airlines Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) —

David Seymour's job over the next few weeks is making sure that American Airlines flights take off on time and fly safely during one of the busiest travel periods of the year. Seymour is American's chief operating officer, which means he oversees flight and airport operations for a carrier that figures to make about 6,500 flights a day between now and New Year's Day.

A West Point graduate and former U.S. Army infantry officer, Seymour joined America West Airlines in 1999. America West became US Airways, then merged with American in 2013. Seymour has held a variety of operations-related jobs and was promoted to his current post in 2020.

Seymour spoke with The Associated Press recently about managing huge passenger numbers during the holidays and preventing people from getting on a plane before their boarding group is called. The answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Q. How are you going to make sure American flights run on time during the holidays?

A: There are many thousands of people running



(Associated Press Illustration/Jenni Sohn)

the airline every day. My job, honestly, over this period isn't so much about managing the chaos, it's managing really all the challenges, and we'll call it the headwinds that come our way. And I would say the vast majority of those are the uncontrollable.

Q. Such as?

A: What's going on the (air-traffic control) system around us. If there weren't weather that we have to deal with and other complications that sometimes arise, running an airline would be pretty easy.

Q. How will you recover

from disruptions?

A: Before the pandemic, we would have a big storm in the DFW (Dallas-Fort Worth) area or the Charlotte (North Carolina) area, and it would take us a couple of days (to recover). We set about coming through the pandemic and coming out that we are going to recover better than any carrier out there.

Q. And how will you do that?

A: By anticipating the weather. My team looks out constantly at what the weather is, looking at multiple weather forecasts to

understand what's coming, what could it do, and how are we prepared for that.

Q. How much do you learn from big cancellation events? And how much do you learn from meltdowns at other airlines?

A: The team here, they do an after-action review. We will look at it and say, 'What could we have done better?' And we archive that information. Now, to your other question about competitors. I'm not inside the other competitors' operations centers and looking at how they do that. Their networks are set up differ-

ently than ours. We do ask ourselves, 'OK, if something similar were to happen to us, what would we do?'

Q. With Christmas travel, what are the big things you're looking for? Is it weather? Air-traffic control problems?

A: Weather is always a tough thing to predict. That's really going to be one of the largest things because it has the potential for having the most impact. Controller-wise, we stay in touch with (the Federal Aviation Administration). We have a team out here that is in constant communication with the FAA, looking at what's happening in the system, and we're building contingency plans if they think there are going to be some challenges.

Q. You need to deice planes.

A: The only difference between summer and now is we have to deal with winter weather in some locations. So, deicing. But we're ready for that. The technology we have right now with the deicing vehicles ... we've been able to reduce our throughput time on deicing by half and still meeting all the requirements that we need to in terms of adequately deicing the aircraft, but having one person do it. □

Taylor Swift's Eras Tour ends by shattering own record, grossing an estimated \$2.2B, Pollstar says

By **MARIA SHERMAN**

AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Taylor Swift's Eras Tour brought in \$2.2 billion in its nearly two-year run, making it the highest-grossing tour of all time for a second year in a row, Pollstar estimates from data collected across 149 shows.

The new numbers were provided to The Associated Press on Monday, the morning after Swift wrapped the Eras tour with its final show in Vancouver, Canada. Last year, Swift's landmark tour became the first to cross the billion-dollar mark. In North America, Swift's tour earned an estimated

\$1.04 billion over its run. Globally, that number jumps to an estimated \$2.2 billion.

"We are witnessing history in the making. What Taylor Swift and The Eras Tour accomplished in 21 months



Taylor Swift performs during "The Eras Tour" on Friday, Dec. 6, 2024, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Associated Press

across five continents before 10 million fans is extraordinary and unprecedented. The tour's \$2.2 billion estimated gross is the highest of all time and nearly doubles the second biggest tour," said Andy Gensler, editor-in-chief of Pollstar & VenuesNow, in a statement. "It's also an example of the limits this industry continues to push far past while bringing music, community and peak life experiences to legions across the globe."

The second biggest tour is Coldplay's ongoing "Music of the Spheres" run, currently at an estimated \$1.14 billion since March 2022,

with more dates to come in 2025.

According to Pollstar's approximations, Coldplay has sold more than 10.3 million tickets; Swift's tour sold just over 10 million, which means she's sold the most tickets of any solo performer. Pollstar data is pulled from box office reports, venue capacity estimates, historical Pollstar venue ticket sales data, and other undefined research, collected from November 2022 to December 2024.

Additional data will become available in Pollstar's special year-end issue and on Pollstar.com beginning Friday. □

\$1 million per homer? \$27,000 a point? \$229 per second? Sports is loaded with money oddities

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Sports Writer

These were Juan Soto's numbers in 2024: 41 home runs, 109 RBIs, a .288 batting average.

Keep doing that over the next 15 years, and he'll be making roughly \$1.2 million for every home run. Or \$467,890 for every RBI. Or \$307,229 for every hit. (Pre-tax, of course.)

Soto's \$765 million, 15-year agreement with the New York Mets the richest contract in terms of total value to a player in U.S. major sports history, a massive move by billionaire Mets owner Steve Cohen provides a chance to look at the numbers in some very silly ways.

He'll make \$314,815 per game. Based on his numbers this season, he'd get \$671,053 for every extra-base hit. Or \$46,322 every time he swings the bat no matter if he misses, hits a tapper back to the mound or has Mr. Met celebrating in the stands after driving one out at Citi Field. Of course, that's assuming Soto remains as healthy and productive as he was in 2024. If he misses significant time, those rates just go up.



New York Yankees' Juan Soto speaks during media day for the baseball World Series, Oct. 24, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

"Thank you Uncle Steve," Mets outfielder Brandon Nimmo wrote on social media.

Some of the numbers around the sports world, when broken down by accomplishment, are simply eye-popping in this era. (And keep in mind, these examples are based on current earnings, not taking into account restructurings or any other potential changes.)

A look:

MLB: Blake Snell, Dodgers

The two-time Cy Young winner will earn about \$65 million in 2025, most of which is a signing bonus that comes his way in January. He's also never made more than 32 starts in a season. If he makes 32 starts in 2025, he'd be getting (when factoring in the signing bonus) \$2,031,250 per game. For comparison's sake, Detroit's Tarik Skubal made \$2.65 million for the entire 2024 season and won a Cy Young award.

MLB: Shohei Ohtani, Dodg-

ers

His record \$700 million deal is no longer a record because of the Soto deal, but Ohtani still holds the mark for average total value at \$70 million a year. The only member of baseball's 50-50 club (54 homers, 59 stolen bases in 2024) would at this past season's rate be making \$619,469 every time he hits one out or steals a base.

NFL: Dak Prescott, Cowboys

It's unfair to break down his

stats this year because he's hurt, but Prescott's current deal is worth an average of \$60 million a season from Dallas. Based on his career average, that means over the lifetime of his current contract, Prescott gets \$13,680 for every passing yard.

NFL: Quarterbacks in general

The per-game numbers in the NFL for starting quarterbacks are wild. Patrick Mahomes' current \$450 million contract isn't even at the top of the cash-per-game standings: Prescott gets about \$3.5 million for every Dallas regular season game, while Jacksonville's Trevor Lawrence, Cincinnati's Joe Burrow and Green Bay's Jordan Love are around \$3.25 million per game.

NBA: Stephen Curry, Warriors At nearly \$56 million this season, Curry leads the NBA salary race (for this year, anyway).

The NBA's all-time 3-point king is earning about \$680,000 per game in 2024-25; if he was paid by the 3-pointer only, he'd be getting about \$161,908 every time he makes one of those this season. □

Aryna Sabalenka wins the WTA Player of the Year award and Emma Navarro is picked as Most Improved

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Aryna Sabalenka received the WTA Player of the Year award for the first time on Monday after winning two Grand Slam titles and finishing 2024 at No. 1 in the rankings.

In other results of voting by tennis media, Emma Navarro was honored as Most Improved Player, Paula Badosa was named Comeback Player, Lulu Sun was Newcomer of the Year, and Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini were picked as the Doubles Team of the Year.

Sabalenka, a 26-year-old from Belarus, won the Australian Open in January and the U.S. Open in Sep-

tember, along with two other titles this season, going 56-14 with nearly \$10 million in prize money. She overtook Iga Swiatek for the top ranking in October. Navarro made her debut in the WTA's top 10 in September after making her deepest Grand Slam run at the U.S. Open, where she eliminated defending champion Coco Gauff in the fourth round before losing to Sabalenka in the semifinals.

The 23-year-old Navarro, who grew up in South Carolina and won the 2021 NCAA singles championship at the University of Virginia, won her first tour title at Hobart, Australia, in

January, and moved from No. 32 in the rankings at the start of 2024 to No. 8 at the end.

Badosa sat out the last half of 2023 with a back injury but the 27-year-old Spaniard was back near the top of the sport this year, climbing to No. 12 in the rankings, winning the title in Washington and equaling her best result at a Grand Slam tournament by getting to the U.S. Open quarterfinals.

Sun went from outside the top 200 in the rankings to a career-best No. 39, highlighted by a quarterfinal showing as a qualifier at Wimbledon in July and a runner-up finish at the Monterrey Open in August. Sun,

23, was born in New Zealand, grew up in Switzerland and helped the Univer-

sity of Texas win an NCAA team championship. □



Aryna Sabalenka, of Belarus, hugs the trophy after winning the women's singles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships against Jessica Pegula, of the United States, on Sept. 7, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

Another final-second victory puts the Chiefs in prime spot to secure AFC's No. 1 seed: Analysis

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

A thunderous doink helped the Kansas City Chiefs gain some breathing room in the race for the No. 1 seed in the AFC after the Buffalo Bills fell short despite Josh Allen's spectacular performance.

The fight for the top spot in the NFC stayed close as the Minnesota Vikings and Philadelphia Eagles kept pace with the Detroit Lions. Four weeks remain in the NFL regular season to determine the playoff picture. There's a clear leader in the fight for the AFC's bye. The two-time defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs (12-1) are in excellent position to secure home-field



Kansas City Chiefs kicker Matthew Wright (49) watches his game-winning field goal as time expires in an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Chargers Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

advantage throughout the playoffs after Matthew Wright drilled a 31-yard field goal off the left upright and through the goal posts as time expired for a 19-17 win over the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday night.

Patrick Mahomes again made all the big plays when the Chiefs needed them most and they rallied for their 15th straight one-score victory.

Kansas City has a two-game lead over the Bills (10-3) and Pittsburgh Steelers (10-3). Buffalo holds the tiebreaker over the Chiefs after handing Kansas City its only loss in Week 11. The Chiefs and Steelers face off in Pittsburgh on Christmas. Russell Wilson improved to 6-1 this season, tossing two touchdown passes to help the Steelers beat the Cleveland Browns 27-14.

Allen became the second player in NFL history to throw three touchdown passes and run for three scores in the same game. Otto Graham did it for the Cleveland Browns in the 1954 NFL championship game but Buffalo's defense couldn't stop Matthew Stafford, Puka Nacua and the Los Angeles Rams in a 44-42 loss on Sunday. The Bills had won seven in a row. They visit the Lions next week while the Steel-

ers go to Philadelphia.

The Eagles barely held on for a 22-16 victory over the feisty Carolina Panthers. The ugly win left some of Philadelphia's players in a sour mood.

Wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith weren't thrilled with the offense's performance. The Eagles (11-2) again relied on Saquon Barkley, who had 124 yards rushing on 20 carries.

That meant Jalen Hurts didn't have to do much. He threw for just 108 yards with two TDs passing and one more rushing.

Barkley broke LeSean McCoy's single-season franchise record for yards rushing. He's up to 1,623 yards, moving closer to Eric Dickerson's NFL record of 2,105 set in 1984.

Brown, who slammed his helmet out of frustration on the sideline after a three-and-out in the third quarter, responded bluntly when asked where the offense needs improvement. "Passing," Brown said, without elaborating.

Brown was targeted just four times, catching all four passes for 43 yards. Hurts didn't throw him the ball a couple of times when he was open, including on a TD pass to Smith.

Brown said it's "incredibly tough" for receivers to get into a rhythm because the offense is so run-heavy.

The Eagles have won nine straight games and trail the Lions (12-1) by one game for the No. 1 seed in the NFC. Detroit currently has the tiebreaker edge.

The Vikings stayed hot on the Lions' heels thanks to a career day from Sam Darnold in a 42-21 rout over Kirk Cousins and the Atlanta Falcons.

Darnold had a career-best 347 yards passing and five touchdowns, leading Minnesota (11-2) to its sixth straight win. The Vikings finish the season in Detroit in a matchup that could determine the NFC North and the No. 1 seed in the NFC. But there's a long way to go until Jan. 5. □

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